Zach Hemler

Professional Genre

On January 2, 2013, Neal Bland (18), Anthony Wade (19), and Keagean Arrington (19) have all been charged with capital murder of Joshua Wood; age 22. December 21, 2012; the day that sneaker enthusiasts have been waiting on for months. On that day, the highly collectable and extremely popular, Air Jordan “Bred” XI released for the first time since 2001. The three men followed Joshua home after they saw him purchase the $185 sneaker. They had every intention of stealing that shoe but ended up with a murder case rather than a robbery. Yes, the three men took an innocent man’s life over one pair of sneakers. Is a pair of sneakers really worth so much as someone’s life? Thousands of dollars is one thing but no amount of money is equal to a man’s life. How could a pair of sneakers drive people to such extremes?

Air Jordan sneakers have been around since the early 80’s and have done nothing but grow in popularity sense. With so many special releases and rare color ways, the price of these shoes can grow to numbers that some people could never imagine spending on a pair of shoes. They have such a high demand; you are very lucky to be able to purchase a pair. Not everyone is fortunate enough to have the resources enabling to purchase them after the release for a huge mark up in price, so for a lot of people their only hope of getting the shoe is on release day for retail price. Why is the demand for these sneakers so high? What makes them so popular? Is it people trying to be cool because everyone has them or wants them? Or is it something about the shoe that makes them feel like they need to have them?

This extreme demand drives people to do extreme things. From huge fights breaking out in the middle of a mall, to robberies, and in the most extreme case, murder. People actually want the shoe, THAT badly that they are willing to take a person’s life over them. That’s what these shoes have come to. The last thing any company wants is for their product to be linked with violence, and The Jordan Brand has recognized that problem. They are beginning to realize that these crazy, hectic release mornings in the mall could potentially be the problem. They want to try and keep people out of the malls. Just recently they tried an online release. The shoe being the Cement III “Retro 88” color way. The demand for this shoe was unreal. Being sought out by almost every sneaker head in the country. With the Nike Air branding on the back of the shoe, the collectability of the shoe was endless. Everyone wanted a pair, but with a limited production number only few people would be so lucky to own a pair.

The Jordan Brand tried a new way of releasing the shoe. Rather than releasing them in selected Foot Locker locations, they did an online release. It kept people out of the mall, and it gave criminals no way of knowing who purchased the shoes and whom they could steal them from. All over the country people sat at their computers and smart phones waiting for the release. The shoe sold out in a matter of seconds. For me personally I had 4 computers up and running to try and purchase a pair and was unable to. The demand was that high. Ultimately the shoe released with no problems. We could potentially see this in the future from Jordan brand for the highly anticipated and popular releases.